

Section 3

AFVs in the Airport Shuttle Industry: Outreach Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

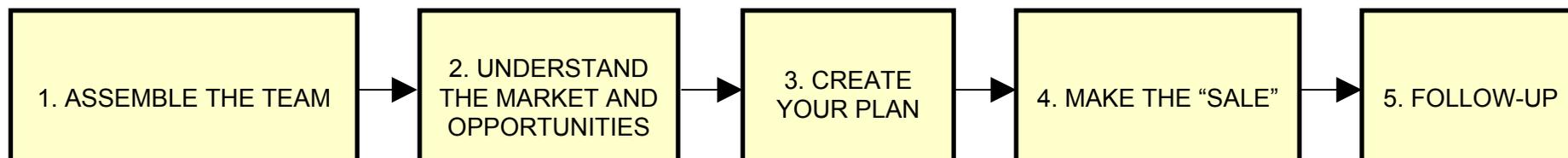
This section of the Tool Kit provides a general guide to marketing AFVs to operators of airport ground transportation shuttles. A **general strategy** is offered that builds on Section 2 of this *Tool Kit*, Characterization of Niche Market, setting out steps for creating **tailored strategies** for individual airports. This guide is aimed primarily at persons interested in marketing to shuttle fleets at individual airports, although it also would be of use to those marketing AFVs or alternative fuels nationally or regionally. Users of this document might include members of local Clean Cities Coalitions, alternative fuel providers, AFV manufacturers, airport operators, fueling equipment manufacturers, metropolitan planning organizations, state energy offices, or others. Each may have a slightly different stake in the program, but all will be interested in seeing alternative fuel vehicles used more extensively in airport shuttle operations.

Overview of the Process

This strategy is set out in five major steps, as summarized below:

1. Assemble your Team.
2. Understand the market and opportunities.
3. Create your plan.
4. Make the “Sale.”
5. Follow-up.

Each of these major steps is briefly summarized below. The remainder of this strategy document provides additional step-by-step detail.



1. Assemble the Team: The first step is assembling the team who will help do the outreach. They should be individuals who can and will make a commitment for the long-haul – getting AFVs on the ground at any airport is not going to happen overnight. The team may be a subgroup of several people from the local Clean Cities Coalition. Remember that success requires all system elements (e.g., vehicles, fuel, infrastructure, maintenance, training, etc.) to be present and working. Representatives for each of the system elements should be part of the outreach team and help in constructing the system solutions. Meet and agree on goals and roles – who will be responsible for what.

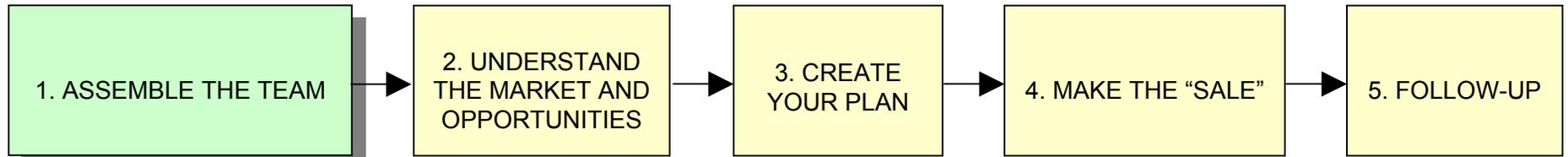
2. Understand the Market and Opportunities: The second step is doing your homework. Specifically, this includes developing a general understanding of airports, your airport in particular, and the issues associated with ground transportation. In short, before proceeding you must understand the market and the opportunities. Reading Section 2, Characterization of Niche Market, provides a basic knowledge of the airport shuttle market. Then, develop an understanding of local air quality issues facing airport officials and the role AFVs could play in addressing these issues. You must understand the comparative emissions of AFVs and conventionally fueled vehicles. Pull together information on the recent pricing structure of conventional and alternative fuels in your region and the infrastructure that could support an airport shuttle fleet. Conduct a survey to count and identify shuttles at your airport. Then meet with airport officials to show them what you have found, and LISTEN! Later in this section, the types of officials you should meet are identified.

3. Create your Plan: The third step is creating your plan. Develop a local strategy/plan using everything you have learned and write it down and follow it! Pick your highest priority target fleets. Pre-qualify target fleets as much as you can – they are your potential “customers.” Determine the appropriate person to meet with at each candidate operator. They are the ones who make vehicle purchase decisions. Assemble marketing packages from existing material.

4. Make the “Sale:” The fourth step is “making the sale” or getting commitments for shuttle operators to purchase AFVs. Here is where an airport operations management champion is critical. Show the prospective fleet operator/customer how the system team has been put together and how each of the system elements will work together to support the shuttle operators needs. This will be an iterative process and it calls for determination, persistence, and creativity. The “sale” won’t happen on the first call. Focus on providing solutions to specific shuttle operator problems and concerns. Find out what their issues are, work the problem, then, go back. Use “success stories” and testimonials about how other fleet operators have successfully integrated AFVs into their fleet and benefited. Nothing sells like success. Show how their on-going support needs will be met.

5. Follow-up: The final step in the process, often overlooked, is follow-up. “Support after the sale” is an absolute necessity to make AFVs a success in airport shuttle operations for those whose livelihood depends on providing reliable, cost-effective shuttle service. Ongoing commitments are needed from each of the system component representatives (including vehicle maintenance, fuel supply and pricing, training, etc.) to provide service and support when needed. A failure to deliver on this important aspect of AFV operation leads to an unhappy customer, and difficulty in further expanding the use of AFVs.

STEP 1. ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM



How To

If not a member, meet with the local the Clean Cities Coalition. Attend coalition meetings and make contacts. Call local energy supply companies such as the gas distribution company, principal propane dealerships, and ethanol and electric vehicle representatives. Also, call Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and vehicle up-fitter representatives. Check with state energy office for additional allies. Make sure you have on your team someone from each system element.

Include team members from these system elements:

- OEMs or Vehicle Up-fitters
- Fuel providers
- Trainers/educators
- Infrastructure developers

Include marketing team members and allies who will:

- Offer long-term help
- Have access to funds
- Provide training and technical support
- Assure accessible fuel supply
- Share market research information

Be Sure To Look For

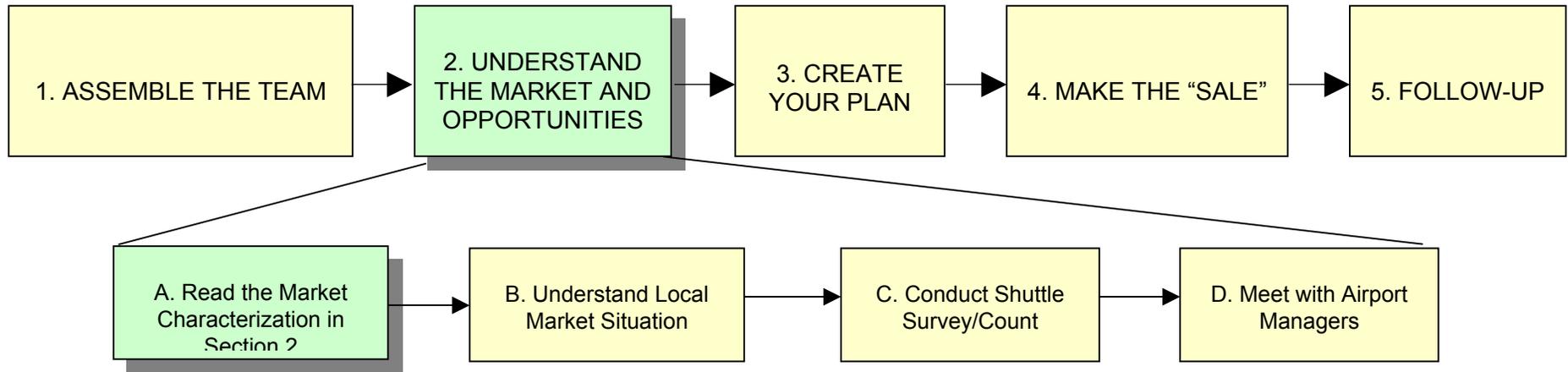
Private sector stakeholders for cooperative ventures and governmental stakeholders with access to federal and state funds.

Why?

Where to go for more information:
 Alternative Fuel Data Center
www.afdc.doe.gov
 Clean Vehicle Education Foundation
 703-527-3022
 Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition
www.ngvc.org
 US DOE Office of Transportation Technologies
www.ott.doe.gov
 Clean Cities
www.cities.doe.gov
 Alternative Fuel Vehicle Fleet Buyers Guide
www.fleets.doe.gov

These groups have a stake in helping to support an airport AFV shuttle marketing effort and should be able to assist, promote, and help find additional funds.

STEP 2. UNDERSTAND THE MARKET AND OPPORTUNITIES



A. **Read Section 2, Characterization of a Niche Market in this Tool Kit**

How To

Read Section 2, Characterization of a Niche Market, to understand about the airport ground shuttle operations that serve airports. Use the information to guide your analysis.

Be Sure To Look For

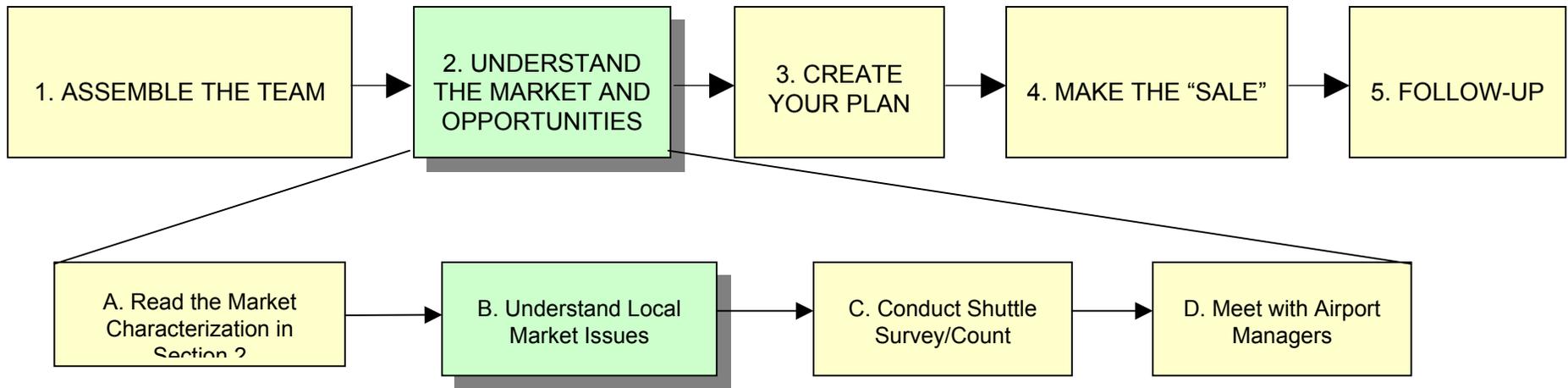
The differences among types of shuttle operations and the perspectives of their owners.

Why?

Section 2, Characterization of a Niche Market, describes the main types of shuttle operations that serve airports. The Characterization describes what different types of shuttle operators want in their operations and what to look for when marketing to them. The characteristics of the four general types of airport shuttle ownership are summarized on the next page in Table 1. These are the main factors that will influence AFV purchase decisions.

Table 1. Summary of Characteristics of Airport Shuttles by Ownership Type

Shuttle Market	Principal Characteristics
Airport Managed Shuttle Fleets (e.g., public parking, employee parking, and terminal-to-terminal shuttles.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airports may want good publicity and political credit for reducing air pollution. • Some airports buy shuttles and operate them with their own employees. • Other airports request proposals from vendors to operate their parking shuttles. AFVs can be included in bid specifications. • An airport with AFV fueling on-site is a better candidate for AFV growth than one without. • Airports use a number of funding sources; incentives for AFV use are often needed.
Hotel-Owned Shuttle Fleets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most hotel shuttles are for passenger convenience and are considered a part of the hotel’s marketing. AFVs could be used in the hotel’s customer outreach program. • Mileage may be low in comparison to other shuttle types. • Personnel with other duties usually operate hotel shuttles. Reliability and ease of refueling are important operational factors. Nearby refueling is essential.
Rental Car Company Shuttle Fleets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The major rental car companies are very concerned about reliability and vehicle appearance. • Despite rental car company shuttles being high-mileage vehicles, fuel cost is not a primary consideration. However, a few companies do acknowledge fuel use as a secondary concern. • Smaller rental companies, usually operating a mile or more from airport property, often use cutaway vans. Larger operations use small buses. • Local franchise managers seem less concerned about shuttle operational issues than do the major rental car companies although reliability is still a factor. Savings in fuel cost are secondary but if demonstrated can be “icing on the cake.”
Private Parking Lot Shuttles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick access to the airport, convenience, and competitive costs are critical to getting people to use private lots. Thus, AFV reliability, fuel cost, vehicle cost, and convenience of fueling are very important to the private lot operator. • Cutaway vans are very common. • Operators are reluctant to pay more for AFVs. Financial incentives are very important.
Privately Owned, Commercially Operated Shuttle Fleets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “expected” market factors, such as high fuel cost, affect these shuttles. Managers strive to reduce fuel costs, ensure reliability and want convenient refueling. AFV financial incentives often needed. • Purchase decisions may require national (home) office approval. Local managers are important decision-makers but corporate managers may resist recommendations for AFVs because of their higher capital cost. • This is a high volume, thin profit margin business. Vehicle reliability is a major issue. • Some owners are concerned about retaining professional drivers because such drivers reduce liability. This is another factor relating to convenient refueling and vehicle reliability.



B. Understand Local Market Issues

1. Local Air Quality Status and the Potential Role of AFVs

How To

If not a member, check with the local Clean Cities Coalition and state environmental agency to learn about local area air quality and status of emission reduction plans. Call the State Energy Office or check the Clean Cities web site to locate the contact person and learn more about this Clean City (www.ccities.doe.gov). Contact the state government’s environmental department and ask for the “air quality” office (best place to look is the telephone book). They know all about the U.S. EPA and its rules. Also call the area’s metropolitan planning organization (or council) because these bodies are key players in the local air quality process.

Complete documentation of the comparative emission benefits of AFVs relative to conventional fueled vehicles. Get reports and information from the DOE, Alternative Fuels Data Center, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the Gas Research Institute, and others. Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) has developed a computer program for estimating emissions from AFVs called “AirCred,” which is available on the Clean Cities website.

Be Sure To Look For

The status of the area's "State Implementation Plan" (SIP) and whether or not the airport area is "in attainment" of air quality standards. If it is not, or if it is having trouble staying "in attainment," this may be a strong selling point for AFVs. Are there any AFV programs for air quality benefits in the area already? Have emissions from the airport been identified as special concerns now? Which pollutants are the major concern in the area?

Why?

Airports and the aviation sector have been recognized as some of the last remaining emission sources in metropolitan regions that are still largely unregulated. In addition, airports are the fastest growing transportation sector. In many areas, the combined emissions from all the various airport-related sources are greater than most other point sources of pollution. Thus, the U.S. EPA and regional authorities are investigating the significance of airports as pollutant sources and trying to identify ways of reducing their emissions. Airport shuttles represent a relatively easy and appropriate target for emission reductions programs. AFV technologies are well developed and cost effective, a limited number of vehicles and owners are impacted, and significant levels of reduction can be achieved.

Where to go for more information:

Clean Cities

www.cities.doe.gov

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

www.ampo.org

EPA Air Pollution Office

www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Transportation Technologies

www.ott.doe.gov

State Energy Office (obtain list from National Association of State Energy Officials)

www.naseo.org

Clean Cities Hotline

1-800-224-8437

2. Define Available Refueling Infrastructure

How To

Check with state energy office, local gas utility(s), propane dealerships, ethanol suppliers, and area fuel dealers' associations. The telephone numbers should be in "Government" and "Yellow Pages" of the telephone directory.

Be Sure To Look for

- Whether or not AFV refueling is available on, or near airport property.
- What are the characteristics of available refueling stations?
- If refueling is not available at or near the airport, what would it take to create such a facility?
- Talk to local fuel companies such as natural gas utilities, propane companies, ethanol organizations.
- Learn what federal, state and local regulations apply to refueling sites.
- Talk to local Clean Cities Coalition and state energy office representatives about assistance in developing new AFV refueling site(s).
- Develop a proposal for U.S. DOE State Energy Program (SEP) or CMAQ funding.
- Ask above parties and local airport to see if a cooperative venture can be launched that brings interested parties together to overcome obstacles and find funds.

Investigate local fueling infrastructure to determine:

- What fuels are available?
- How convenient is the station to the airport?
- Has it been reliable?
- For CNG, is there only one compressor or two, providing some level of back-up?
- Where is the next closest station?
- How many vehicles can be filled at the same time?
- How fast can vehicles be refueled?
- For CNG stations, what is filling pressure?
- What size vehicles can be accommodated?
- What are the hours of operation?
- How is purchase made (credit card, debit card, contract card, punch code, cash, other)?
- Is access to the pump proprietary or can anyone obtain fuel there?
- Can capacity be easily expanded?

Why?

Existing or planned fueling infrastructure is perhaps the most critical element in supporting airport AFV shuttles. If infrastructure does not exist, infrastructure development must be included as a part of the airport shuttle/AFV program.

Where to go for more information:
Alternative Fuel Data Center
www.afdc.doe.gov & 1-800-423-1363
Electric Vehicle Association of the Americas
www.evaa.org
Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition
www.ngvc.org
National Propane Gas Association
www.npga.org
Renewable Fuels Association
www.ethanolrfa.org

3. Investigate External Funding Opportunities

How To

Check with Clean Cities Coalition, state energy office, transportation department, and metropolitan planning organization(s) and alternative fuel web sites cited above. The most important source to explore is the national Clean Cities Web site entitled, *Alternative Fuel Vehicle Fleet Buyers Guide Incentives and Laws* at www.fleets.doe.gov/cgi-bin/fleet/main.cgi?9381_benefits_1,29474

Be Sure To Look For

The opportunity to combine multiple funding sources.

- The Clean Cities Coalition can work with the state energy office to obtain special funding from the Department of Energy for AFV purchase, infrastructure and promotion.
- The Propane Education Research Council (PERC) provides funds for demonstrations.
- Seek out the incentive programs available from Federal (particularly DOE and DOT) and state agencies, and other sources.
- The FAA has a \$20 million competitive program for funding Inherently Low-Emission Airport Vehicles (up to \$2 million each for up to 10 airports). Information on this program is included elsewhere in this Information Tool Kit.
- Each state's Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organization(s) are gateways for obtaining Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds.
- Work with area OEM or vehicle up-fitter representatives who attend the local Clean Cities coalition meetings to work out cooperative agreements and scout out additional funding.
- Analyze shuttle operator needs carefully. Be flexible and creative. For example, with CNG, a slow fill Fuel Maker, or other slow fill device, may be all that is necessary to meet infrastructure needs. Contact local fuel companies to find out more about purchasing and using such devices.
- Ask local fuel suppliers what incentives they may offer.

Where to go for more information:

Alternative Fuel Data Center

www.afdc.doe.gov & 1-800-423-1363

Propane Education Research Council

Jill Hamilton 703-322-4484 or

jhamil9700@aol.com

Alternative Fuel News

www.afdc.nrel.gov/documents/altfuelnews

Your local Clean Cities Coalition

www.cities.doe.gov

Your State Energy Office (look for member's list on web site)

www.naseo.org

A Guide to the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Act, Federal Highway Administration 1994

www.bts.gov/NTL/data/energy-env/air/00489.html

Why?

Many AFVs cost more than conventional vehicles and a new fueling infrastructure requires significant investment. Locating external funds to defray the added cost of AFVs adds value to the marketing effort. Funding and infrastructure are the two most critical factors in AFV shuttle sales.

4. Define Local Fuel Pricing

How To

Transportation fuel prices are highly variable from region to region, state to state, and even within a given locale. The delivered price of the fuel is most important to the fleet operator and this price must include all cost elements such as state and federal road taxes, pumping or compression costs, retailer profit, etc. Your local fuel provider can generally be the most helpful. You will need to compare the cost of conventional fuels to the alternative fuels and may have to go to several sources to determine these costs. The state energy office and local AAA club can supply price averages for local conventional fuels. The energy office may know about propane prices too, otherwise try several local dealers. Not all of the dealers will be selling propane for motor fuel so several calls may be needed. The local gas distribution company will have natural gas prices and most will be able to tell you what they charge for CNG from stations they own. Most areas have only one gas distribution company (assuming that a shuttle operator is not interested in buying “off-line” gas). The local electric company can quote electricity rates but will probably equate these to vehicle power consumption in very general terms, if at all.

Be Sure To Look For

Comparative fuel costs, fuel price stability and trends. Fuel costs vary over time and the price stability of a fuel that is new to the operator may be important. The DOE-EIA site is especially valuable because it contains information on many fuels (www.eia.doe.gov).

Why?

Fuel costs may be an important factor for some, but not all, types of shuttle operations. Knowing whether or not there is a cost advantage between alternative and conventional fuel may help the AFV acquisition decision.

Where to go for more information:

Your local fuel provider

American Petroleum Institute

www.api.org

American Gas Association

www.aga.org

Petroleum Marketers Association

www.pmaa.org

Renewable Fuels Association

www.ethanolrfa.org

Natural Gas Supply Association

www.ngsa.org

American Public Gas Association

www.apga.org

5. Understand OEM and Up-fitter Shuttle Availability

How To

Refer to the lists of equipment in this Tool Kit. Contact OEM vehicle suppliers and reliable up-fitters and learn about their vehicle product offerings. Contact the Clean Cities Hotline for up-to-date information (1-800-224-8437). Also, learn where and how sales and maintenance are provided.

Be Sure To Look For

Vehicle types and configurations that fit the characteristics needed by various shuttle fleet operators and what alternative fuel configurations are available for which vehicle type.

Why?

Successful marketing requires knowledgeable presentation of all the equipment required to support an AFV fleet. Helping the shuttle operator with specific knowledge shows the operator that homework has been done and his operational needs are understood.

6. Understand Airport Plans and Problems

How To

Before going to visit the airport, read local newspaper stories. Call the airport public information office. Visit the local library. Any reports the airport will have done under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (e.g., Environmental Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments) must be made publicly available. Find out where they are. Many airports have regular public outreach meetings.

Be Sure To Look For

Any plans for major expansion. Are there issues of traffic congestion or roadway improvements? Have the neighbors been complaining about the airport? Has air quality or pollution from the airport been identified as a problem? Have any State bond programs been approved or proposed to fund airport expansion?

Why?

Knowing this information will enable you to develop better outreach strategies and to ask better questions when you do go to see airport officials.

7. Understand the Role of AFVs in Local and Regional Plans

How To

Your local Clean Cities Coalition is the best source of this information. Also, contact your State Energy Office, local fuel providers, and regional OEM representatives.

Be Sure To Look For

Where AFVs have been used and where they are planned. Find out the success stories, but also find out where there may have been problems. Understand what the problems were and how they were fixed or how the industry reacted to keep them from happening again. If an equipment failure occurred, find out which specific model was the problem. The Clean Cities website has successful airport AFV cases studies.

Why?

The airport shuttle outreach program should fit within the context of the overall local AFV development program. The shuttle operators may like to know that they are not unique and that successes can be pointed out locally. If the fueling infrastructure is expanding locally, that also will be important information. Similarly, if some problems were experienced locally with prior AFV use in certain fleets, it is a safe bet that many fleet operators will know about it. In most cases, those problems can be dismissed as being associated with early generations of vehicles or equipment and that those problems have been solved. Know the facts!

8. Understand the Use of AFV Shuttles at Other Airports

How To

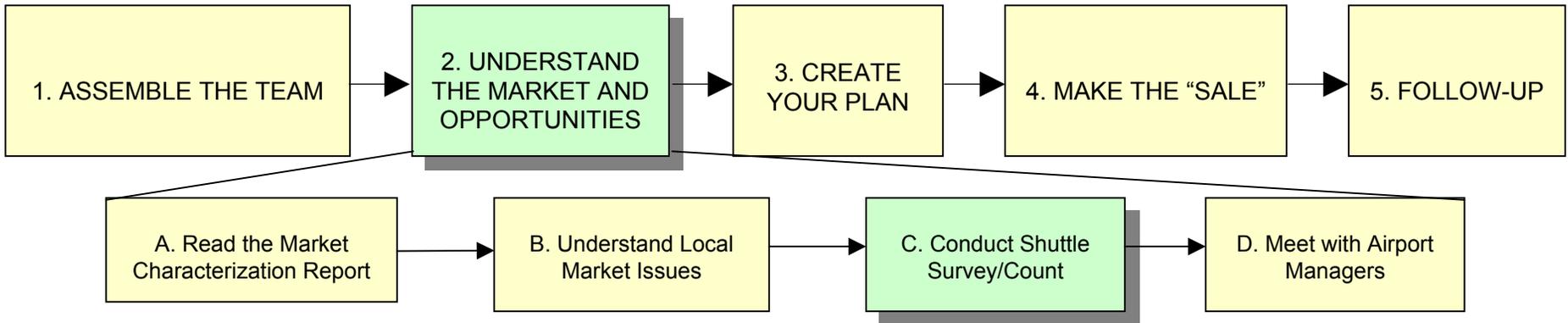
You won't need to survey all airports. The national AFV associations, the Clean Cities Hotline, OEM representatives, and others organizations can give you case studies and other information.

Be Sure To Look For

Examples that match your expected target fleets. Operators of transit sized buses won't be interested in information on AFV use in large vans, and vice versa.

Why?

AFVs have been proven at airports. When you finally do meet with the airport managers and shuttle operators you will need to be armed with information on where AFVs have been used successfully in similar applications.



C. Conduct A Shuttle Survey/Count

How To

Conduct an on-site survey at the targeted airport terminal(s) to count the number of shuttles passing the terminal and obtain the names and telephone numbers of the companies that own/operate them from the sides of the vehicles. Find a professional survey company in your area. No interviews are needed, only observation. Although great levels of skill are not needed, attention to detail and consistency are important. Plan the survey carefully. A one-day survey is usually sufficient to determine the relative traffic each shuttle company generates at the target airport. The traffic volume at smaller airports may not require a formal survey; several hours of observation during peak hours may suffice and permit extrapolation. The survey may cost on the order of \$1,000, depending on the number of personnel needed and duration.

Be Sure To Look For

The number of shuttles each operator uses and the number of times any one shuttle passes the terminal. This will give an idea of how many shuttles each operator runs at the airport and which units might be the best targets for replacement with AFVs.

The “Watch and Learn Survey”

- Visit the airport for an initial look at terminal shuttle traffic.
- Learn peak times for passenger pick up and drop off and identify major shuttle operators.
- Identify ideal locations for surveyors to observe shuttle traffic. More than one surveyor is usually needed.
- Decide whether or not to conduct a one-day survey in order to count the number of shuttles and the types of vehicles used or a partial-day survey including one peak period.
- Prepare a survey form to use. See the example survey form.
- Prepare instruction sheet for surveyors.
- Visit surveyors after several hours to identify problems with process.
- If a partial-day survey is used, extrapolate for full day estimate.
- Examine results and determine which shuttle companies are worth contacting.

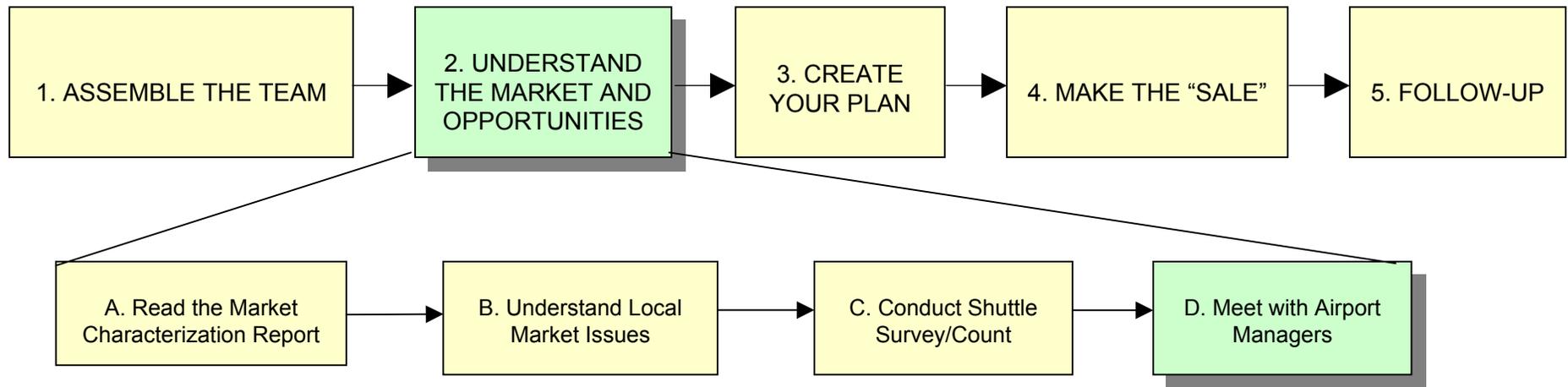
Why?

Knowing which operators log the most miles and have the most shuttles will help determine which ones to approach first.

Example Survey Field Tally Sheet

Location:
Surveyor:
Date:
Time Begun:

Company Name	Vehicle ID	Vehicle Type (Check one)					Phone No.
		Van	Cutaway	Lg Bus	Sm Bus	Other	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
etc							



D. Meet with Airport Managers

How To

Meet with airport management to learn about what issues they are facing, how the use of AFVs will help solve some of their problems, and how receptive they are to encouraging AFVs at their airports. Each airport is organized differently, so any one title will not necessarily be found at any given airport. If the airport has a Transportation Manager, that is one person you want to see. Also, it is generally useful to meet with the Environmental Manager because they have a hand in many AFV programs. If the airport treats shuttle operations as a concession, you may need to speak with the Commercial Manager. If you can meet with the Airport Director and obtain his or her support, that is always useful. You will find that they will be interested in the results of your shuttle survey because they are always seeking information on the way passengers get to the airport.

Be Sure To Look For

- Status of plans for airport passenger growth and facility expansion.
- Passenger growth plans signal increased shuttle traffic. Note the passenger “load” numbers of Section 2, Characterization of Niche Market.

Check List for Shuttle Operation Information

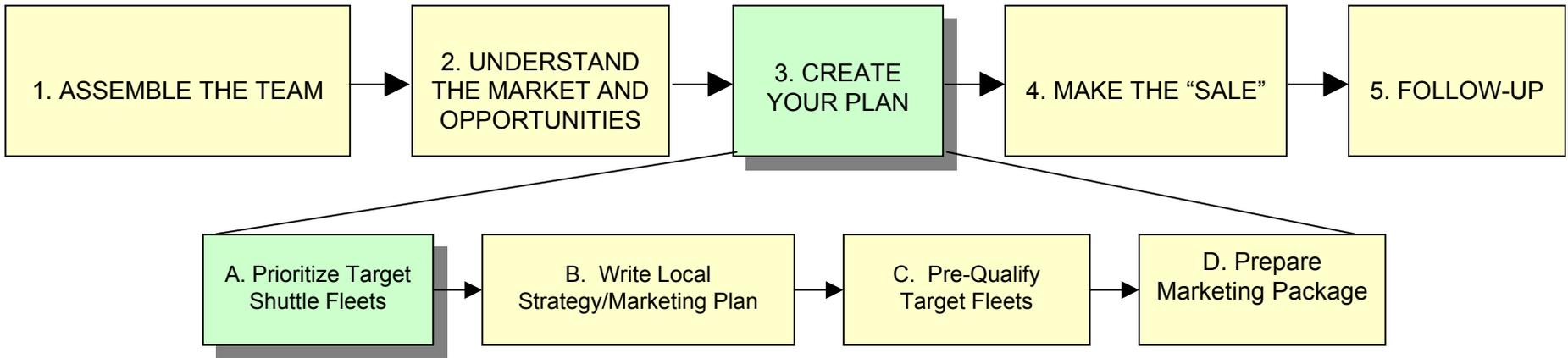
- Who owns and operates the facility?
- Who makes ground transport purchase or contract decisions?
- How are airport shuttles managed (owned and operated by airport, concession agreements with shuttle companies contracts with private companies to run airport – owned equipment, lease and operate, etc.).
- What is the airport shuttle procurement process?

- History of AFVs at the airport.
- Pay special attention to:
 - Praise and criticism of AFVs so that the marketing strategy can take account of this insight.
 - Airport's principal concerns and issues regarding passenger ground transportation in the context of airport operations.
 - Organizational and decision-making structure at the airport.

Why?

The airport can be the most important partner in promoting AFVs. The airport management/authority can facilitate AFV acquisition. If an airport is expanding, added growth may signal a need to reduce future emissions thus opening the door for AFVs. Also important, airport procurement procedures may help or hinder AFV acquisition and need to be understood. Finally, airport concession agreements can be used to encourage, or even require, AFV use. Ask about this. Find or develop a champion within airport management who understands the benefits of using AFVs and include that person as part of your team, if possible.

STEP 3. CREATE YOUR PLAN



A. Prioritize Target Shuttle Operators

How To

Focus your outreach effort based on the results of previous steps. Use the results of the shuttle survey and follow-up calls to airport managers for clarification if needed. Understanding your goals helps to prioritize your targets. For instance, if your goal is maximizing emissions benefits, you may put less emphasis on a small fleet that could be an easier sale. Similarly, to justify a new fueling station, you may need to tie it to a fleet large enough to make the system economical for everyone.

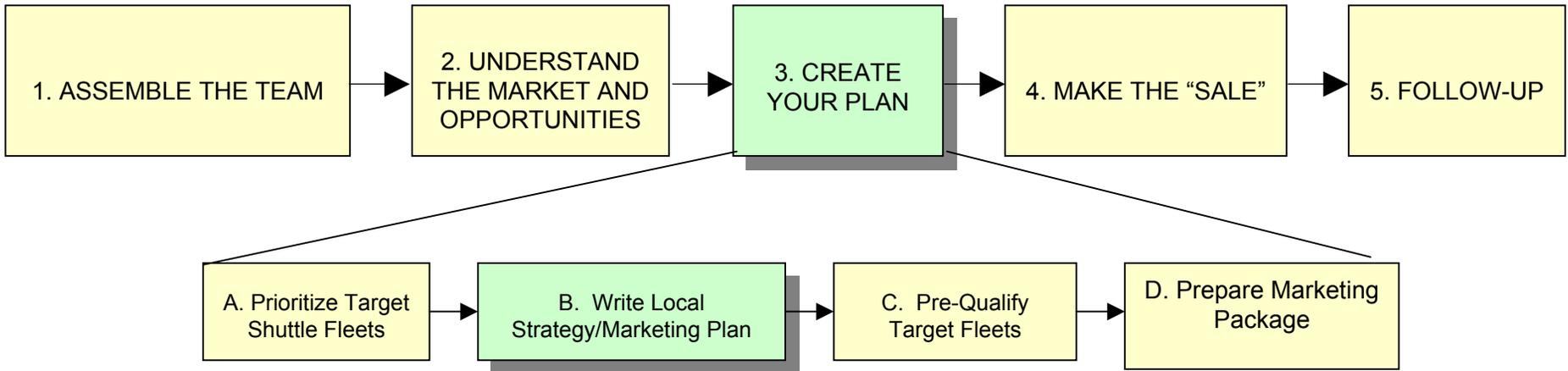
Be Sure To Look For

Operating and ownership differences between different types of shuttle operators.

Where to go for more information:
OEM Information in Tool Kit
 Airport Ground Transportation Association, Inc
www.agta.com
Alternative Fuel Data Center
www.afdc.doe.gov
American Hospitality Fleet Services
www.hotelbus.com
American Public Transit Association
www.apta.com
Clean Fuels and Electric Vehicle Report
Hybrid Vehicles
EVNews Magazine
www.energy-futures.com
Natural Gas Fuels
PropaneVehicle
www.rppublishing.com
National Corporate Transportation Services
www.nctservices.com
ShuttlePort Management Services, LLC
 888-320-5550

Why?

Knowing the dominant shuttle types, the timing of large vehicle replacement orders, and the operational needs of various shuttle operations helps marketing.



B. Write a Local Strategy/Marketing Plan

How To

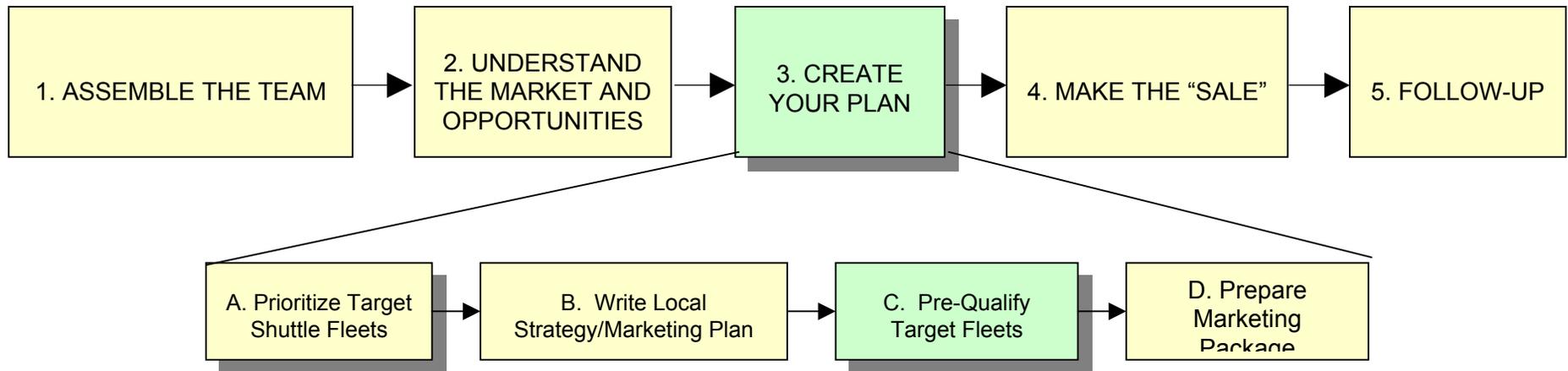
You now have enough information to develop the marketing plan for your effort to put AFVs in service in shuttle fleets at your local airport. The document does not have to be long, but it should be complete. Document what you have learned and what has been decided. The plan should document the specific goals and objectives and the timeframe within which you expect to see results. Identify those fleets and types of fleets on which you will focus. List the major selling points you expect to use (e.g., emissions benefits, fuel savings, available funding, etc.). Specify roles and responsibilities for each member of the team, showing action and schedule of activities. Specify how you will measure success of the program. Get buy-in from each member of the team. The Clean Vehicle Education Foundation team can provide help with development of your plan.

Be Sure To Look for

Plans are useful to the degree that they are specific, actually followed, and updated in order to stay current.

Why

A Plan focuses your work and allows you to keep track of successes and requirements for further work. Most marketing efforts fail because the specific market was not understood, a rational plan was not written or persistent effort was not applied following the plan. A plan is a “roadmap” for guiding the marketing efforts so that the needs of different types of shuttle operations can be met, and the perspectives of airport operations management can be addressed.



C. Pre-Qualify Target Fleets

How To

The objective is to be as smart as you can about the target fleets’ issues before you go to meet with them. Investigate potential customers by examining web sites, meeting with Clean City stakeholders, national OEM representatives and others who may have had prior contact with these fleets locally or nationally. By talking to others who have already talked to them, if possible, find out if the shuttle operator knows about AFVs, has had past problems, is interested in environmental issues, accumulates enough mileage to make investment worthwhile, and is open-minded about AFVs. Also, if it is a national chain, determine where else in the chain AFVs may have been used. The national alternative fuel associations can help find this information. If your investigations are negative and you can find no one who has spoken with the target fleet owner before, that is also useful to know when planning your meeting with them.

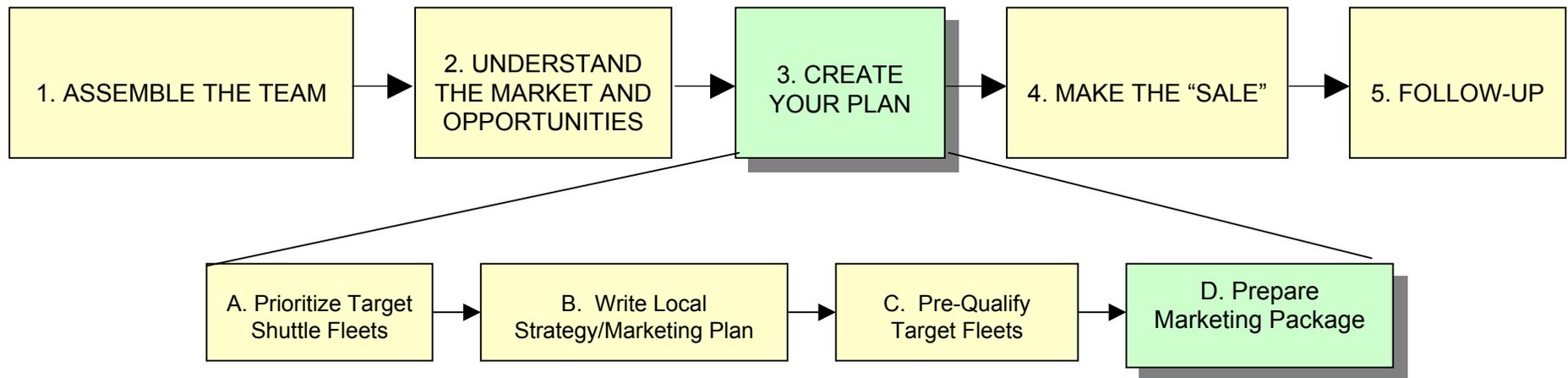
Be Sure To Look For

Shuttle operators and airport authorities that are willing to share positive AFV experiences with others.

Why?

Efficient, effective marketing depends upon finding willing customers. Some operators have no interest, others do not have funds, and all have operational needs that must be addressed because one size does not fit all. Important considerations for your review are summarized by the following table.

Things to Learn About Potential Customers	What To Do About It
Have they used AFVs before?	If no, find out why. If yes, find out if experience was positive.
Interested in environmental issues?	If yes, include “green” factor in sales strategy. If no, find out why and show economic advantage of addressing environmental factors.
Monthly, annual, mileage of shuttle vehicles	Calculate if operator’s shuttles run enough to justify added AFV cost.
Vehicle replacement plans	If soon, how many AFVs could be considered? If some time off, would operator consider a “pilot” program with 1 or 2 vehicles?
If an airport authority, what are the local political considerations regarding air quality?	Airport officials may be amenable to AFVs in order to help state and local governments meet environmental mandates or help support airport expansion.
Is the airport a state agency?	The airport may be able to help the state meet its EPACT mandates for AFV use by using AFVs in its shuttle fleet.
What factors will determine if the operator needs help to defray the added cost of AFVs?	This helps determine whether you need to seek supplemental funds or whether or not to seek another potential customer.
Does the shuttle operator use vehicles for which OEM or up-fitter replacements are available?	If no, seek another potential customer.



D. Gather Sales Literature and Prepare Marketing Presentation

How To

Gather literature for all equipment that applies to each prospective shuttle operator. Prepare a market presentation targeted to specific operator’s needs with local airport conditions in mind. Keep overhead slides or other visuals uncluttered. Provide “hands-on” demonstrations where possible. Use “success stories” and testimonials effectively. Be prepared to cover the economics thoroughly. Use material in this *Tool Kit* when applicable.

Be Sure To Look For

Up-to-date product literature from OEMs and up-fitters, AFV guides from the U.S. Department of Energy and the state energy office and local Clean Cities Coalition.

Why?

Worth repeating: one size does not fit all. Market AFV solution(s) to the potential customer’s operational needs. This will have been determined during the pre-qualifying step.

- Important Items to Include in the Literature and Market Presentation**
- Funding opportunities
 - Relative fuel cost
 - Environmental regulations
 - Repair facilities
 - Fuel availability
 - Vehicle warranties
 - Vehicle re-sale
 - Experience of others

Where to go for more information:

Alternative Fuel Data Center
www.afdc.doe.gov & 1-800-423-1363

Clean Vehicle Education Foundation
www.cvef.org

Natural Gas Vehicle
www.ngvc.org

National Propane Gas Association
www.npga.org

Renewable Fuels Association
www.ethanolrfa.org

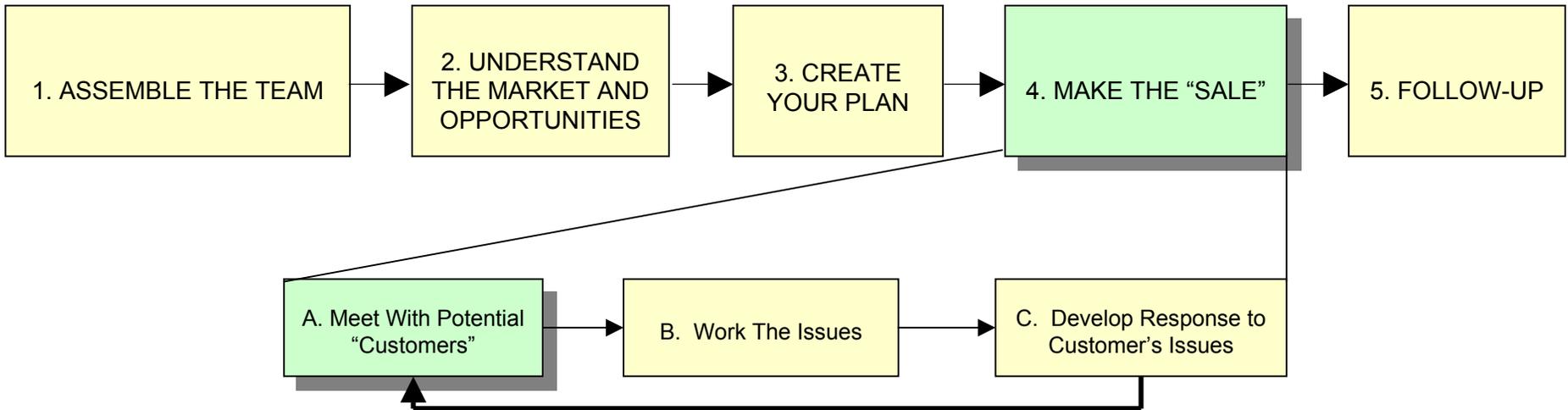
Clean Cities
www.cities.doe.gov

State Energy Office (obtain list from National Association of State Energy Offices)
www.naseo.org

Electric Vehicle Association of the Americas
www.evaa.org

AFV List in Tool Kit (Check manufacturers for latest editions)

STEP 4. MAKE THE “SALE”



A. First Sales Contact with Potential Customer – LISTEN!

How To

Be prepared to listen more than talk and have handouts available with oral marketing presentation in reserve. If time and customer permits, make presentation. Otherwise, listen, provide literature, and make firm appointment for follow-up. At the first meeting, determine what additional presentations may be helpful (e.g. ride and drive, case studies, workshops, and visits with successful users). Begin the process by verifying pre-qualification information obtained earlier. Determine if that operator might (or might not) be open to acquiring AFVs. Understand the problems and issues of each potential customer. This will allow the formulation of an approach that addresses each problem and removes impediments to AFV usage.

Be Sure To Look For

Any previous experience the operator may have had with AFVs and/or misinformation operator may have picked up about AFVs.

Why?

Advanced knowledge of the operator's needs helps to focus this meeting. In the past, much AFV marketing has focused on national environmental and fuel issues. This Outreach Strategy emphasizes first knowing and addressing the customer's operational needs; be specific to his concerns.

Identify Target Customer Decision-Maker(s)**How To**

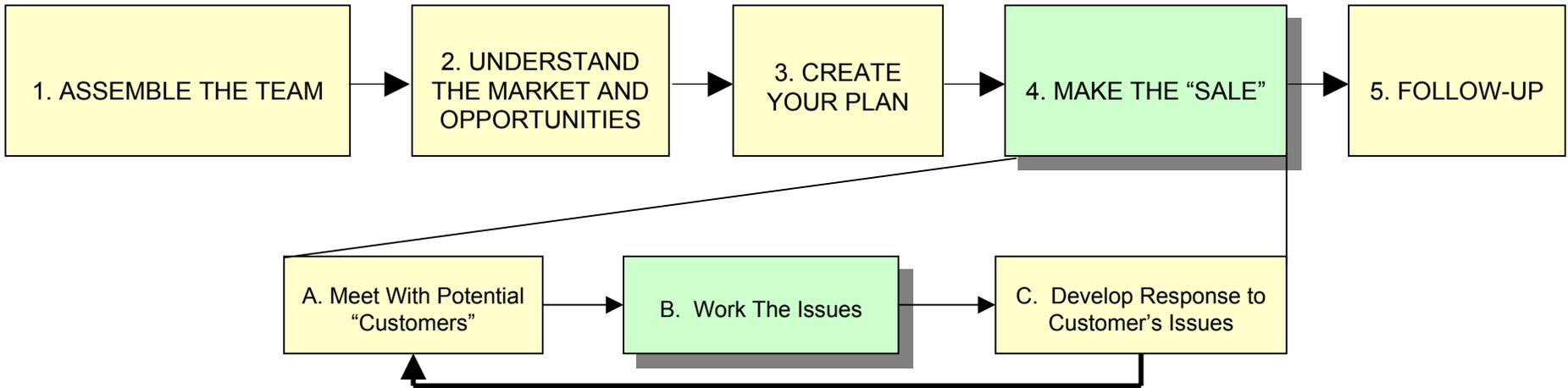
Find out who makes both local and national purchase decisions. For government agencies, learn who makes procurement decisions and learn about the rules governing them.

Be Sure To Look For

Where purchase decisions originate and where procurement practices and rules can stall them. Some governmental agencies make their procurement rules easy to find while others do not. Agency procurement rules are a matter of public records; however, not all government clients will share. The airport authority may not even have the guidelines on hand. In that case, find out if the budget agency or comptroller, or other such entity will make them available. Private entities, of course, are under no obligation to reveal their procurement rules.

Why?

Efficient, effective marketing depends upon talking to/meeting with the right people. It may be necessary to talk to several levels of decision-makers. Also, it is especially important to understand the procurement process in government agencies because this is often a barrier to sales even when key personnel are "on board."



B. Work the Issues

Working the issues begins with analyzing what was learned in the first meeting with the prospective customer. Essentially, solutions are developed to satisfy the operator’s needs, concerns, and desires. If the operator’s needs and issues are not addressed, the operator will have little further interest in acquiring AFVs.

In the best of all worlds, the first meeting with a prospective customer leads to an immediate vehicle purchase commitment. A more likely scenario is that the operator will have questions, may have impressions based on bad information, may not understand how AFVs relate to its shuttle operation, or is not ready to consider ordering any new vehicles, much less AFVs. Infrastructure and funding are the two most common concerns. Below is a set of suggested problem solving approaches that address issues likely to be encountered. They are issues that have frequently arisen before in the marketing efforts of others.

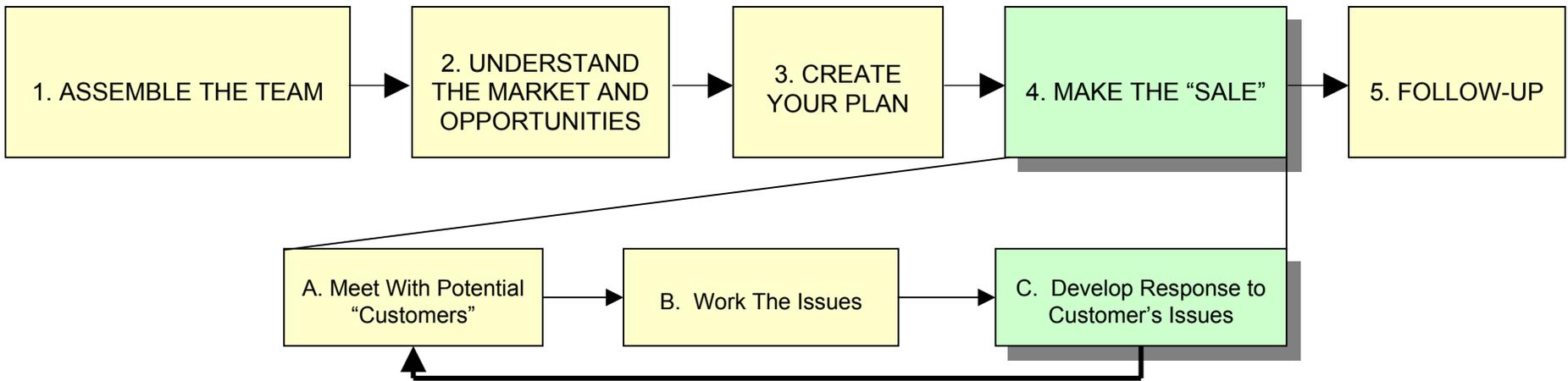
Update “customer qualification” information based on results of first meeting. Prepare follow-up material and marketing tools in accordance with the operator’s request and what was learned during the first visit. Much of the information is available from research performed in the earlier steps of this process. Now, however, one or more specific solutions are needed to satisfy an operator’s requirements.

Why?

The follow-up visit provides the opportunity to “solve” the operator’s problems. This is the time to evaluate a variety of resources and package them in order to answer the operator’s questions and provide solutions to the operator’s problems.

Below are some problem solving suggestions. Remember to seek help from allies such as Clean Cities stakeholders and Clean Vehicle Education Foundation partners when answering questions from prospective customers.

For Problems with:	Description
Equipment	Find AFV offerings that meet operator needs including “custom” packages. Look for such things as range of operation between fueling, reliability of equipment, availability of repair facilities, warranty and ease of operation. For example, many operators are looking for low-floor buses and other ways to accommodate handicap access.
Funding	Funding information was obtained earlier. Now contact specific funding source(s) and arrange potential lines of credit, grant application information, financing, or subsidy to satisfy the operator’s capital purchase needs.
Infrastructure	Information on existing refueling infrastructure was obtained earlier. Now determine if special options can be created (e.g. reduced price for guaranteed product sales volume). If access to refueling locations is proprietary, find out how the operator can access such sites.
Education	From discussions with prospective customers, specific information needs have been determined. Try to get agreement from successful AFV users for visits/inquiries by prospective customers. Or, arrange workshops, ride and drive opportunities, visits from vehicle representatives, or other educational experiences as needed.
Procurement	Assist the operator in meeting airport authority procurement requirements. Assist with government and commercial bid packages including requested product research, accounting and bid documents. Assist in bid drafting as needed.
Emissions	Maximizing emissions benefits may be an issue. Be prepared to calculate (or seek help with calculating) emission benefits. The operator may be thinking that “Clean Diesel” is the way to go. Educating them on the status of comparative emissions between technologies and the commercial readiness of fuel options may be appropriate. Call the national alternative fuel vehicle associations.
Additional research	Provide a business analysis to the operator including fuel cost and operating costs comparisons to illustrate market economics applicable to the shuttle operation. See if the operator will allow surveys of passengers to determine opinions and attitudes about cleaner fuels. Or conduct them with a cooperative operator and use them to show others that passengers favor such vehicles.



C. Develop Response to Customers Issues

How To

Handhold as needed. Go back to the potential customer with the solutions or answers you have developed. Be prepared to coordinate and package various Problem Solving Tools together in order to secure the acquisition and use of AFVs at the target airport. Set-up return calls and be prepared to answer more questions. Recognize the fine line in the balance between persistence and badgering.

Overcoming the “Bad Experience”

- Explain that OEMs and up-fitters, in fact, do provide the same service for their AFV products that they offer for their conventional models.
- Help the customer identify reliable maintenance and repair locations at the time of sale. Because there are relatively few AFV repair facilities, leaving the customer to search for suitable facilities may reduce or eliminate prospects for further sales.
- Ask satisfied customers to tell their story.
- Call on the Clean Vehicle Education Foundation for help, if needed.

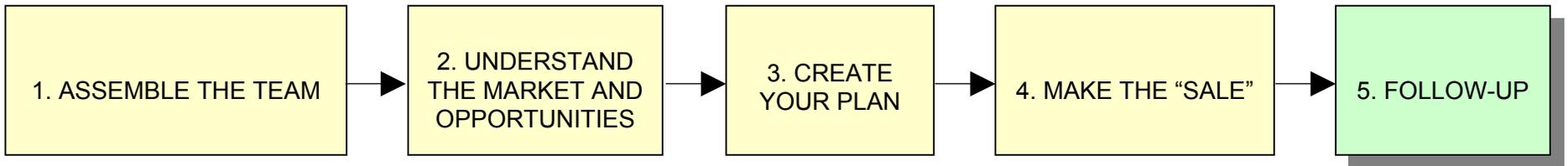
Be Sure To Look For

Signs of slow movement and delay that should be remedied quickly. Look for signs that the potential customer cannot be swayed and is just looking for excuses. Readjust your priorities with the reality of the feedback you get and the likelihood of a “sale.”

Why?

If the prospective customer has no experience with acquiring AFVs, questions and concerns are normal. Even though a “package” of Problem Solving Tools has been put together, the operator may be too busy to keep an eye on all of the parts. Careful follow-up will help to ensure that the commitment is obtained.

STEP 5. FOLLOW-UP



Overlooking this step in the process can create a failure in an otherwise successful marketing effort. “Support after the sale” is essential to have a successful AFV shuttle operation.

How To

Obtain ongoing commitments from each of the “system” stakeholders to support the shuttle operator, as needed. Maintain periodic contact with the shuttle operator. Find out if the operator is having any problems with the AFVs, maintenance, or refueling operation. Track fuel sales to determine if AFV usage is slipping. Maintain contact with stakeholder representatives to ensure that they are doing their jobs. Make it easy for the shuttle operator to contact you.

Be Sure To Look For

- Signs of discontent with the operator.
- Fuel sales that are trailing off.
- Failing relationships between the operator and stakeholders

Why?

Shuttle operators deliver a needed service to airport patrons. Vehicles that provide passenger transportation in a for-profit climate form the livelihood of the operator. A problem with a business owner’s livelihood will reduce his reliability of service delivery, create added cost, and create a bad impression about AFVs. All of this makes a sale harder for the next marketer/time. A failure to deliver ongoing support leads to an unhappy customer and difficulty in further expanding the use of AFVs. The above steps, while not a guarantee for success, will alleviate many operator concerns and will improve Team probability of success.